

The 4 Components of AFIX

The AFIX approach incorporates 4 key elements to improve immunization service delivery - Assessment, Feedback, Incentives and eXchange of information. The purpose of AFIX is to move health care personnel from a state of unawareness about the problem (low immunization rates in their practice) to one in which they are 1) aware, concerned and knowledgeable, 2) motivated to change, 3) ready to try new behaviors/strategies, and 4) capable of sustaining these new behaviors.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the cornerstone of the AFIX process. Assessment refers to the evaluation of medical records to ascertain the immunization level for a defined group of people. This step, along with feedback of the results, is essential because most providers overestimate their practice's immunization rates. Accurate assessments done in provider settings can identify overall coverage levels and pinpoint problem areas that the provider may not have known existed. It enables providers and their staff to make data-based decisions on how to improve performance.

Data gleaned from accurate assessments can be used to guide strategies for improving immunization service delivery and office policies. Continuous, ongoing assessments of performance are also essential in order to effectively monitor change in provider behaviors and practices. Assessment increases awareness.

The purpose of an assessment is to:

1. Diagnose service delivery problems
2. Identify useful changes in policy and practice
3. Monitor and refine interventions.

After doing an assessment, there is a great deal of valuable information to be shared with practitioners and their staff. It is important to realize that assessments alone are not sufficient to improve immunization coverage levels. How we communicate the results of an assessment is just as important as how the data are measured. Assessment data coupled with feedback creates the awareness necessary for behavior change.

FEEDBACK

Feedback is the presentation and discussion of assessment findings to providers and their staff about their service delivery practices. Feedback of information can give the provider insights on record keeping practices, patient drop-out rates, missed opportunities, and inappropriate use of contraindications. The data should be presented with feeling and precision, without judgment, and as a challenge. The CASA reports contain diagnostic information that can isolate a single component of immunization delivery and serve as clues to the source of the systemic problem. The feedback given should enable providers to identify problems, devise solutions, and set attainable goals.

The purpose of feedback is to help providers:

1. Discuss issues and develop their own solutions
2. Monitor progress towards goals
3. Motivate to improve

INCENTIVES

Incentives can be used to publicize achievements and motivate providers to improve immunization coverage levels. The key to this aspect of AFIX is to provide effective rewards for positive change in immunization rates and services. This recognition could be attributed to an extraordinary immunization coverage rate (90% or greater), a substantial increase in immunization rates, or the implementation of standing orders or a reminder/recall system.

The purpose of providing incentives or recognition is to:

1. Enhance pride in workmanship
2. Reinforce sense of mission
3. Establish goals for immunization services
4. Stimulate friendly competition.

EXCHANGE

The eXchange component of AFIX can occur in conjunction with Feedback and Incentives or it can be an ongoing process which shares information among providers. Once providers begin using strategies of assessment and feedback and are motivated to change behaviors and practices, they become more interested in learning more about the best ways to improve coverage. Information exchange allows providers and their staff to educate their peers on what barriers they faced in implementing specific interventions and how they overcome those barriers to achieve success.

The purpose of eXchange is to:

1. Inform providers about appropriate immunization practices and dispel myths that may exist
2. Promote the value of assessment as a diagnostic tool
3. Share ideas about what works and what doesn't
4. Create a sense of common priorities and mutual goals among providers.

SUMMARY

AFIX as a quality assurance tool consists of **assessing** the provider's vaccination coverage levels, **feeding back** that information along with recommending strategies for improvement, providing **incentives** to the provider to improve vaccination levels, and **exchanging** information among the providers within the community about performance and best-practices. This quality assurance measure is a proven and reliable tool for improving vaccination coverage levels in provider offices.